

November 17, 2005

### Akin Announces Promotion, Hires of St. Louis-Area Staff For D.C. Office

U.S. Rep. Todd Akin today announced several staff changes in his Capital Hill office.

“These are exceptionally talented people, and I am glad to welcome them to my D.C. staff,” said Akin. “The fact that four of them are St. Louis-area natives only adds to my pleasure in bringing them on board, although having a native Texan join my staff adds some welcome variety, as well.”

**Lauren Ellis, Senior Legislative Assistant:** Ellis, who has served in various capacities on Akin’s staff for four years, has been promoted to Senior LA. A St. Louis native, Ellis graduated cum laude from Vanderbilt University with a degree in economics and history. She covers health care policy, district projects, transportation, tax and agriculture issues and Akin’s Small Business Subcommittee on Regulatory Reform.

**Brent Tantillo, Counsel and Legislative Assistant:** Tantillo, who joined Akin’s staff in May, graduated from the University of Texas in Austin with a degree in finance and the University of Houston Law Center with a J.D. with a concentration in natural resources and environmental law. Before joining Akin, he was deputy director of Projects for Civil Justice Reform and Religious Liberty at the Hudson Institute; government relations consultant for Freeport McMoRan Copper and Gold; and Director of Institutional Advancement at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. His portfolio includes judiciary, immigration, education, energy, environment, banking and financial services and labor issues and Akin’s work on the Science Committee.

**Justin Johnson, Legislative Assistant:** Johnson comes to the Akin office from the U.S. Helsinki Human Rights Commission. He will be handling “culture of life” issues, human rights, religious persecution and telecommunications policy. Johnson, who was born in St. Louis, is a 2003 graduate of Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, GA and previously worked for CIGNA HealthCare.

Johnson’s predecessor, Autumn Fredericks, has left the Akin office to become co-director of the House Pro-Life Caucus.

**Kate Mersman, Legislative Aide:** Mersman, currently Akin's staff assistant, is being promoted to coordinate all legislative correspondence and to handle Social Security, welfare, postal affairs and housing issues. A St. Louis native and graduate of Ursuline Academy in Kirkwood, Missouri, Mersman received her degree in mass communications in 2004 from Miami University (OH). She began a paid internship on Akin's staff last fall, after previously interning for U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-OH), and serves as a student mentor for Miami's Washington, D.C. internship program.

**Carolyn Moore, Staff Assistant:** Carolyn Moore joins the Akin staff after serving as an intern for the Congressman in 2004. Another St. Louisan and a graduate of Kirkwood High School, Moore graduated cum laude from Miami University (OH) earlier this year with a degree in economics and political science. She currently serves as a paid intern on the House Ways and Means Committee and in 2004 served as an intern for Akin in the Congressman's Washington office.

*Both Mersman and Moore assume their new jobs on December 5, 2005.*